

HUMAN EVENTS

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Ex-Envoy to Panama Ignore

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By VICTOR RIESEL

An ex-diplomat, who is considered by Latin American experts to be one of the best informed and most experienced specialists of them all, has been completely ignored by our government during the deadly violence of the Panamanian crisis.

He is Joseph S. Farland, whose specialty within a specialty is the Caribbean area and Panama, to which he was U.S. ambassador for some three years.

Not only does he know Panama intimately—its *campesinos* (peasants), its Indians, its cities and mountain and fishing villages first hand—but he is an ex-FBI man who worked



Former Ambassador to Panama Joseph S. Farland has not received one phone call from a government agency since resigning in August. His vast experience in dealing with the Castro operation has been completely disregarded.

on what is known inside the bureau as the "100 Case" category. This is the section handling intricate spy networks. Thus, he is also an expert in counter-espionage, counter-insurgency, counter-infiltration and Communist tactics.

He has been ignored not only during the present crisis, in which American soldiers died from snipers' bullets, but also in recent months when he has been given the rudest and most unprecedented treatment ever handed a returning envoy.

He resigned as ambassador to Panama last August. Since then he has not had one phone call from any government agency. The State Department has even deprived itself and our government of his knowledge by refusing to de-brief him. Never before has this happened—not even to him.

De-briefing is the process during which a returning diplomat confidentially reports to certain government agencies everything he has learned about the nation to which he had been posted. When Joe Farland returned from the Dominican Republic, where he had been a successful ambassador, he was de-briefed.

When he resigned from his Panama post, he sat in Washington for a full three weeks awaiting the usual calls from Central Intelligence, the State Department and several of its divisions, Army intelligence (G-2), the Office of Naval Intelligence (O.N.I.), the U.S.I.A., the Commerce Department's confidential divisions and the Panama Canal Zone Co.

No one called.

Yet the State Department officials knew from Farland's stream of reports, which came up regularly

while he was ambassador to Panama, that he knew the inner details of the Castro operation, its objectives and its tactics.

Secretary of State Dean Rusk was asked about this treatment during a session of the House Foreign Affairs committee on January 15. Rusk turned to an aide and asked, "What about it?" The aide said: "Oh, yes, Mr. Farland has been completely de-briefed."

This was absolutely untrue.

When I talked with Joe Farland this weekend, he confirmed his treatment by the State Department. But he would not interpret it, so we can all draw our own conclusions. It is not insignificant that Mr. Farland sharply criticized the State Dept and the red tape of the Agency for International Development (AID) officialdom when he resigned in disgust.

As for Panama itself, Mr. Farland told me that it has always been one of Castro's first objectives because it is a primary strategic target for the international Communist apparatus.

Farland revealed that there were at least 700 hardcore Castro agents

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operating inside Panama. Their cells are mostly amongst the *campesinos*, Farland said.

"The present activity of the Communists," he revealed, "in Latin America and in Panama specifically is to set up cells in the interior with the *campesinos*. The Castro operatives thereby hope to create a climate for guerrilla warfare. Without support from the land and the peasants, no guerrillas can survive. The Communists also have infiltrators and trained saboteurs in the big cities attempting to work themselves into the unions."

This is corroborated by a report that Sergio Otero, General Secretary of the Panamanian Workers Federation, gave to a Communist global labor meeting in Moscow during its fifth World Federation of Trade Unions Congress.

"A united front of 30 trade unions," said Otero, "has been formed in Panama. Among its objectives is to secure the withdrawal of foreign troops and to achieve the neutralization of the Panama Canal."

Farland, during our discussion of Castro, said:

"Here in the U.S. we should recall the fact that the first armed effort by Castro outside of Cuba was made in the spring of 1959. It was an abortive armed invasion from Cuba. His guerrillas missed their landing point and ended up at an isolated Atlantic spot known as Nombre De Dios, below Colon. Their destination was the mouth of the Cocolé de Norte River, in the heart of government land.

"They had intended to move up into that uninhabited area. This is an old smugglers' route, and I had tried to open it up for the poor people when I was ambassador. The Castro forces' objective was to gather strength from the *campesinos* and overthrow the government. Then they would have assaulted the Canal.

"They failed. But the Communist agents did whip up a burning, looting, rioting throng in November 1959. The same thing as now—along the Fourth of July Avenue."

There were other riots. One broke out shortly after Joe Farland and I talked in his embassy this summer. But no one was hurt until the other day—four months after he quit.

Why has this experienced diplomat been ignored?

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